

REMARKS

Claims 1-84 are currently pending in the present application. Claims 1, 33, 36, 37, 44, 76, 79, and 82-84 are amended. No new matter is added as a result of the amendments. Consequently, Applicants respectfully believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

The 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection of Claims 1-82 over Allan, Bass & Hornbuckle:

Claims 1-82 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Allan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,526,456, referred to herein as Allan) and Bass et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,744,446, referred to herein as Bass) in view of Hornbuckle (U.S. Patent No. 5,613,089, referred to herein as Hornbuckle). Claims 1, 33, 36, 37, 44, 76, 79, and 82-84 are independent claims. Incorporated herein by reference are Applicants' arguments regarding Allan, Bass, and Hornbuckle from all prior responses.

Nevertheless, without conceding any change to the scope of the invention, and reserving the right to file a continuation application, Applicants have amended Claims 1 and 37 to specify that the collection of virtual containers is selected from a plurality of collections, each with a different quantity of virtual containers. Similarly, although different, Applicants have amended Claims 33 and 76 to specify that a package assigning a collection of virtual containers is selected from a plurality of packages, each assigning a different quantity of virtual containers. Also similarly, but different, Applicants have amended Claim 83 to specify that a subscription authorization is selected from a plurality of subscription authorizations, each providing access to a different quantity of software products. Support for these amendments is found throughout the specification, including figure 8 and page 12, line 25.

Without conceding any change to the scope of the invention, and reserving the right to file a continuation application, Applicants have also amended Claim 1 to specify that at least one of the virtual containers is configured to identify a plurality of the software products. Similarly, although different, Claim 82 is amended to specify that a virtual container is configured to identify one of the following: a plurality of software products associated with the virtual container as being

rented by a user to whom the virtual container is assigned; and a portion of a software product associated with the virtual container as being rented by a user to whom the virtual container is assigned. Support for these amendments is found throughout the specification, including page 13, lines 9-13.

Without conceding any change to the scope of the invention, and reserving the right to file a continuation application, Applicants have also amended Claims 1 and 33 to specify that at least one virtual container in the collection is assigned a virtual container priority level corresponding to a variable software product access level. Similarly, although different, Claim 37 is amended to specify that a rental manager assigns to at least one virtual container in the collection a different virtual container priority level from that of another virtual container, wherein each virtual container priority level corresponds to a variable software product access level. Also similarly, but different, Claim 79 is amended to specify that at least one of the selected software products is identified by a virtual container priority level corresponding to a variable software product access level. Further similarly, although different, Claim 84 is amended to specify that at least one of a number of identifiers is limited to identifying a priority level for one of a plurality of software products that is different from a priority level for another one of the plurality of software products. Support for these amendments is found throughout the specification, including page 5, lines 25-26 and page 15, lines 14-19.

Without conceding any change to the scope of the invention, and reserving the right to file a continuation application, Applicants have further amended Claims 1, 44, and 76 to specify that at least one virtual container in the collection provides a different rental period duration from at least one other virtual container in the collection. Similarly, although different, Applicants have amended Claim 36 to add the step of authorizing the user to access a second software product through the computer network for a different rental period duration from that of the first software product. Also similarly, but different, Applicants have amended Claim 83 to specify that a subscription authorization permits selectively removing one of the predefined number of software products and adding a new one of the predefined number of software products before the end of a rental period associated with the

removed one of the predefined number of software products. Support for these amendments is found throughout the specification, including figure 9 and page 13, lines 24-28.

In addition, without conceding any change to the scope of the invention, and reserving the right to file a continuation application, Applicants have amended Claims 1 and 44 to specify that at least one virtual container in the collection permits selectively removing a software product and adding a new software product before the end of a rental period associated with the at least one virtual container. Support for these amendments is found throughout the specification, including page 15, lines 1-5.


The cited references do not disclose, suggest, or make predictable, any one of the amended limitations. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of independent Claims 1, 33, 36, 37, 44, 76, 79, and 82-84 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn. It is also well established that dependent claims include the limitations of the independent claims from which the dependent claims depend, and are patentable for at least the same reasons as the corresponding independent claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of dependent Claims 2-32, 34, 35, 38-43, 45-75, 77, 78, 80, and 81 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) also be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments, Applicants believe that this response has responded fully to the concerns expressed in the FOA and that each of the pending claims is in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. Although only certain arguments regarding patentability are set forth herein, there may be other arguments and reasons why the claimed invention is patentable. Applicant reserves the right to raise these arguments in the future. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,

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